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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - GWOT - Death of Chechen Rebellion  
Leader - Iraq - Sectarian Violence  
PARIS - Tuesday, July 11, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

GWOT - Death of Chechen Rebellion Leader  
Iraq - Sectarian Violence

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

The French national soccer team's return to Paris yesterday and the "Zidane Affair" (a seemingly inexplicable head butt inflicted by the team captain on an Italian player in the World Cup final) again captures headlines and commentaries. Left-of-center Le Monde's front page finds "Civil War Worsening the Chaos in Iraq," and focuses on how Shiite militias assassinate Sunni civilians on the basis of their identity papers. Right -of-center Le Figaro finds "Putin Reinforcing His Russian Empire" with five days left until the opening of the G8 Summit in Saint Petersburg.

Right-of-center Le Figaro notes that North Korea has "succeeded in dividing Asia" between the Japanese who are in favor of sanctions and the Chinese who are against. "The tensions that already exist in North East Asia are weighing in the North Korean missile crisis... Following the missile tests, Japan adopted an unprecedented hard line position pushing for sanctions against Pyongyang... which sparked strong reticence on the part of China... American diplomacy, incarnated by Condoleezza Rice, is much more attentive to the diverging views of the international community on the subject even if the credo with regard to North Korea calls more for a firm stand and rapid reaction than unity. France, however, puts the accent on the latter to 'get all parties on board to vote the resolution.'"

Right-of-center Le Figaro's front page reports the targeted killing of the head of the Chechen rebellion Chamil Bassaiev. The inside article says: "Moscow's public enemy number one killed just days before the meeting with George Bush, champion of the international war on terrorism... Vladimir Putin could not have dreamed of anything better." The editorial by Pierre Rousselin highlights the "new Russia." A separate piece notes that he Kremlin is hunting down anti-globalization militants before the opening of the Summit." On privately-run RTL radio, foreign affairs commentator Isabelle Dath said that "Bassaiev is to Putin what Bin Laden is to Bush". She added that: "Putin's brutal politics have created generations of extremists." (See Part C)

Le Monde's headline announces that "Civil War is Worsening Chaos in Iraq." The daily's correspondent in Baghdad writes: "The scent of civil war has been hovering over Iraq since the day after the American invasion and the fall of the Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein. The attacks aimed against the Shiite community have never ceased since the assassination of the Ayatollah al-Hakim in Najaf in 2003." (See Part C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

GWOT - Death of Chechen Rebellion Leader

"A New Russia"

Pierre Rousselin in right-of-center Le Figaro (07/11): "The elimination of the Chechen terrorist Chamil Bassaiev is perfectly timed for Vladimir Putin with the G8 Summit coming up... This death is for the Kremlin what the death of al Zarkawi was for the White House last month with one marked difference. Even in the northern part of the Caucasus is unstable, Russia can boast having practically quashed the Chechen insurrection while America seems powerless to prevent Iraq from plunging into civil war... The emergence of a new Russia, more sure of itself and more determined to defend its interests means that the other members of the G8 need to redefine their relationship with Moscow. And for Russia this means a better assessment of its relationship with the West... The West will have to remain firm in its insistence that the values of freedom, democracy and competition without appearing to give lessons."

Iraq - Sectarian Violence

"The Mask of God"

The editorial in communist l'Humanite by Maurice Ulrich (07/11): "In

what way would keeping American troops in Iraq ensure security for Iraqis...? The members of the G8 will need to collectively respond to this question. The future of Iraq cannot be left up to the Americans."

"Anarchy, Insurrection and Civil War: The Three Circles of Hell in Iraq."  
The analysis in right-of-center Le Figaro by Renaud Girard (07/11):  
"The neoconservatives at the Pentagon thought that it was enough to topple the Baathist regime to bring about an improvement in the political, social and economic situation in the region of the Tigris and the Euphrates. For these worshippers of democracy nothing could be worse or more terrible than the very real dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. The Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz, thought therefore that it was superfluous to prepare Iraq for the post-war period. They thought that things would sort themselves out and that these things would necessarily be good since they were the fruit of democracy. These two ideologues, who at the time compared the fall of Baghdad to the liberation of Paris in 1944 have since learned that there could be much worse than a political dictatorship: there could be anarchy, or worse than anarchy: insurrection and even worse than insurrection: civil war... In order to break free from the circles of hell in Iraq, the Americans are going to have to give up their dream of being able to withdraw their troops any time soon because the entire country needs to be rebuilt, brick by brick and Washington will have to devote itself quantitatively and qualitatively much more to the task than it has until now." STAPLETON